

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2568

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CANBERRA 1563

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR ALSTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OCON, AS
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER FRASER'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

ON FEBRUARY 27 PRIME MINISTER FRASER WROTE THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING IN SYDNEY FEBRUARY 13-16. HE SENT THIS LETTER TELEGRAPHICALLY TO AMBASSADOR RENOUF FOR DELIVERY. ON THE OFF CHANCE THAT YOU HAVE NOT SEEN THIS CORRESPONDENCE AS YET, I AM TRANSMITTING THE TEXT HEREWITH:

BEGIN TEXT:

MY DEAR JIMMY:

TWELVE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION MET IN SYDNEY FROM 13-16 FEBRUARY THIS YEAR. I BELIEVE, AS I KNOW YOU DO, THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS A MOST IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS REGION AND I FELT THAT YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HAVING AN ACCOUNT OF THE MEETING.

HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES
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ATTENDED: AUSTRALIA, BANGLADESH, FIJI, INDIA, MALAYSIA, NAURU, NEW ZEALAND, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SINGAPORE, SRI LANKA, TONGA AND WESTERN SAMOA. THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL, MR. RAMPHAL, ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING.

THE ORIGINS OF THE MEETING GO BACK TO THE COMMONWEALTH

HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING IN LONDON IN JUNE 1977 WHERE IT WAS AGREED THAT REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN COMMONWEALTH MEMBERS COULD BE OF SPECIAL VALUE IN PROMOTING WIDER COMMONWEALTH AND INTERNATIONAL OBJECTIVES, AS WELL AS FOSTERING GREATER REGIONAL COOPERATION. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE MODERN COMMONWEALTH WITH ITS GREAT DIVERSITY OF NATIONS AND PEOPLES PLAYS A HELPFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS. I KNOW THAT THIS VIEW - EXPRESSED FOR EXAMPLE BY ELLIOT RICHARDSON TO MY FOREIGN MINISTER, ANDREW PEACOCK, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LAW OF THE SEA DELIBERATIONS - IS ALSO HELD BY YOUR ADMINISTRATION.

THE REGION COVERED BY PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE, WITH ITS ENORMOUS AND VARIED NATURAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES, IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE WORLD. HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AT THE MEETING - REPRESENTING NEARLY ONE FIFTH OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION - BELIEVED THAT THIS IMPORTANCE OFTEN WENT UNNOTICED AND THAT THE REGION AND ITS PROBLEMS CALLED FOR GREATER INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION AND SUPPORT.

OUR DISCUSSIONS RANGED BROADLY ACROSS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES. A NUMBER OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT REFERRED TO THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT THE UNITED STATES PLAYS IN THE REGION, AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THIS

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WAS TO BE WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED.

THE MEETING SPENT SOME TIME DISCUSSING INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND STRESSED THE URGENT NEED FOR ALL COUNTRIES TO ADOPT EFFECTIVE DOMESTIC POLICIES TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINED ECONOMIC RECOVERY, TO OVERCOME INFLATION AND TO SECURE PRICE STABILITY.

IT WAS FELT THAT A WEAKER TOTAL WORLD ECONOMY WOULD RESULT IF THE WEAKER ECONOMIES OF THE DEVELOPED NATIONS WERE TO RELY HEAVILY FOR THEIR RECOVERY ON THE REFLATION OF THE MOTOR ECONOMIES, RATHER THAN ON THEIR OWN EFFORTS.

THE MEETING LOOKED AT MAJOR ISSUES IN THE CURRENT NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, IN PARTICULAR THOSE ISSUES IN WHICH THE COMMONWEALTH HAS BEEN BECOMING ACTIVELY INVOLVED THROUGH THE SETTING UP OF WORKING GROUPS, I.E., COMMODITIES AND THE COMMON FUND, INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND FOOD PRODUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY. ON THE COMMON FUND, THE MEETING NOTED THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AUSTRALIA'S POSITION ON THE ISSUES OF OTHER MEASURES AND DIRECT GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS.

A MAJOR ISSUE LOOKED AT THE UNDER THE DISCUSSION OF
INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES WAS THE PROBLEM OF ACCESS
TO MAJOR CONSUMER MARKETS FOR THE EXPORT PRODUCTS OF
COUNTRIES IN THE REGION. THE MEETING URGED THE IM-
PORTANCE OF FREER INTERNATIONAL TRADE TO ECONOMIC DE-
VELOPMENT, AND IN THIS RESPECT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT STRESSED
THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVED ACCESS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRO-
DUCTS TO THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES' MARKETS. THE
MEETING EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN OVER RISING PROTECTIONISM
IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES AGAINST MANUFACTURED
GOODS, AND WAS EQUALLY CONCERNED OVER THE DAMAGING EFFECTS
OF NON-TARIFF AND OTHER BARRIERS TO TRADE IN AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTS. IT WAS NOTED THAT THE RESTRICTION IN AGRI-
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CULTURAL TRADE HAD A DOUBLY ADVERSE EFFECT ON THE DE-
VELOPING COUNTRIES IN THAT IT REDUCED THE CAPACITY TO
IMPORT ON THE PART OF THOSE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN THE
REGION FOR WHOM AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS COMPRISED A HIGH
PROPORTION OF THEIR EXPORT TRADE. THE MEETING ESTABLISHED
A CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON TRADE, WHICH WILL BE CONVENED
BY AUSTRALIA.

I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS
OF THE MEETING WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSULTATIVE
GROUP ON ENERGY TO BE CONVENED BY INDIA. I KNOW

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THAT YOU AGREE WITH THE MEETING'S VIEW THAT THE WORLD IS

NOT YET ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY WITH THE URGENCY THAT IS NEEDED. I AM AWARE THAT YOU HAVE PERSONALLY TAKEN A GREAT INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT. THE MEETING EMPHASIZED THE URGENCY OF DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY FOR THE USE OF ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY SUCH AS SOLAR ENERGY, BIOGAS AND WIND POWER AS A SUPPLEMENT TO, AND A SUBSTITUTE FOR, FOSSIL FUELS.

THE MEETING DISCUSSED THE PROBLEE OF ILICIT DRUG TRAFFIC AND RECONGIZED THAT THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES FORMED THE BASIS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR FIGHTING THIS EVIL. A WORKING GROUP ON ILLICIT DRUGS, TO BE CONVENED BY MALAYSIA, WAS ESTABLISHED.

THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF TERRORISM AND AGREED THAT GREATER INTERNATIONAL COOPERRATION WAS ESSENTIAL TO COMBAT THIS MENACE. WORKING GROUP ON TERRORISM, TO BE CONVENED BY SINGAPORE, WAS SET UP.

ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION WAS THE PROBLEM OF SMALL STATES IN THE PACIFIC AREA. PARTICIPANTS AGREED THAT THERE WAS A REAL AND PRESSING NEED FOR SPECIAL MEASURES TO MEET THE EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS OF SMALL ISLAND ECONOMIES. THE MEETING CALLED ON THE INTER-CONFIDENTIAL

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NATIONAL COMMUNITY TO GIVE GREATER ATTENTION TO THE SPECIAL AND SOMETIMES UNIQUE PROBLEMMS OF SUCH STATES.

ALTHOUGH THE SYDNEY MEETNG WAS AN IMPORTANT NEW DEVELOPMENT, THERE WAS A CONCERN ON THE PART OF THOSE PRESENT TO ENSURE THAT NOTHING WAS DONE WHICH MIGHT DUPLICATE ESTABLISHED CHANNELS FOR REGINAL CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION, SUCH AS THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATINS AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM. THESE EXISTING BODIES ARE MAKING AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL COOPERATION AND EVELOPMENT AND IT WAS THE FIRM BELIEF OF THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT THAT THESE EFFORTS DESERVED INCREASING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

MAY I SAY ALSO THAT I BELIEVE THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND COCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND THE COLOMBO PLAN, OF WHICH BOTH AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE FOUNDATION MEMBERS, HAVE MADE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD AND DESERVE FUL AND ACTIVE SUPPORT FROM THEIR MEMBERS.

I BELIEVE THAT OUR EFFORTS IN SYDNEY WILL PROVE TO

BE OF PRACTICAL VALUE TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS REGION AND
THAT THEY WILL COMPLEMENT THE OTHER REGIONAL AND INTER-
NATIONAL ENDEAVORS IN WHICH OUR TWO COUNTRIES SHARE SO
CLOSE AN INTEREST. IT WAS A SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT
TO ME THAT THE MEETING DECIDED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A
FURTHER SUCH REGIONAL CONFERENCE, TO BE HELD IN DELHI IN
1980, WHEN WE WILL BE ABLE TO REVIEW PROGRESS ON
THESE VARIOUS IMPORTANT MATTERS.

(SIGNED: WITH MY WARMEST PERSONAL REGARDS,
MALCOLM FRASER)
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END TEXT.
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